LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 97
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Love Letters of King Henry VIII

HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS

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Letter First to Anne Boleyn.

On turning over in my mind the contents of your last letters, I have put myself into great agony, not knowing how to interpret them, whether to my disadvantage, as you show in some places, or to my advantage, as I understand them in some others, beseeching you earnestly to let me know expressly your whole mind as to the love between us two. It is absolutely necessary for me to obtain this answer, having been for above a whole year stricken with the dart of love, and not yet sure whether I shall fail of finding a place in your heart and affection, which last point has prevented me for some time past from calling you my mistress; because, if you only love me with an ordinary love, that name is not suitable for you, because it denotes a singular love, which is far from common. But if you please to do the office of a true loyal mistress and friend, and to give up yourself body and heart to me, who will be, and have been, your most loyal servant (if your

rigor does not forbid me) I promise you that not only the name shall be given you, but also that I will take you for my only mistress, casting off all others besides you out of my thoughts and affections, and serve you only. I beseech you to give an entire answer to this my rude letter, that I may know on what and how far I may depend. And if it does not please you to answer me in writing, appoint some place where I may have it by word of mouth, and I will go thither with all my heart. No more, for fear of tiring you. Written by the hand of him who would willingly remain yours, H. R.

Letter Second to Anne Boleyn

Though it is not fitting for a gentleman to take his lady in the place of a servant, yet, complying with your desire, I willingly grant it you, if thereby you can find yourself less uncomfortable in the place chosen by yourself, than you have been in that which I have you, thanking you cordially that you are pleased still to have some remem-

brance of me. 6 N. A. 1 de A. o. na.
v. e. z. Henry R.

Letter Third to Anne Boleyn.

Although, my Mistress, it has not pleased you to remember the promise you made me when I was last with you —that is, to hear good news from you, and to have an answer to my last letter; yet it seems to me that it belongs to a true servant (seeing that otherwise he can know nothing) to inquire the health of his mistress, and to acquit myself of the duty of a true servant, I send you this letter, beseeching you to apprise me of your welfare, which I pray to God may continue as long as I desire mine own. And to cause you yet oftener to remember me, I send you, by the bearer of this, a buck killed late last night by my own hand, hoping that when you eat of it you may think of the hunter; and thus, for want of room, I must end my letter, written by the hand of your servant, who very often wishes for you instead of your brother.

H. R.

Letter Fourth to Anne Boleyn

My Mistress and Friend, my heart and I surrender ourselves into your hands, beseeching you to hold us commended to your favor, and that by absence your affection to us may not be lessened: for it were a great pity to increase our pain, of which absence produces enough and more than I could ever have thought could be felt, reminding us of a point in astronomy which is this: the longer the days are, the more distant is the sun, and nevertheless the hotter; so is it with our love, for by absence we are kept a distance from one another, and yet it retains its fervor, at least on my side; I hope the like on yours, assuring you that on my part the pain of absence is already too great for me; and when I think of the increase of that which I am forced to suffer, it would be almost intolerable, but for the firm hope I have of your unchangeable affection for me: and to remind you of this sometimes, and seeing that I cannot be personally present with

you, I now send you the nearest thing I can to that. namely, my picture set in a bracelet, with the whole of the device, which you already know, wishing myself in their place, if it should please you. This is from the hand of your loyal servant and friend. H. R.

Letter Fifth to Anne Boleyn.

For a present so beautiful that nothing could be more so (considering the whole of it), I thank you most cordially, not only on account of the fine diamond and the ship in which the solitary damsel is tossed about, but chiefly for the interpretation and the too humble submission which your goodness hath used towards me in this case; for I think it would be very difficult for me to find an occasion to deserve it, if I were not assisted by your great humanity and favor, which I have always sought to seek, and will seek to preserve by all the kindness in my power, in which my hope has placed its unchangeable intention, which says, Aut illic, aut nullibi.

The demonstrations of your affection

are such, the beautiful mottoes of the letter so cordially expressed, that they oblige me for ever to honor, love and serve you sincerely, beseeching you to continue in the same firm and constant purpose, assuring you that, on my part, I will surpass it rather than make it reciprocal, if loyalty of heart and a desire to please you can accomplish this.

I beg, also, if at any time before this I have in any way offended you, that you would give me the same absolution that you ask, assuring you, that henceforward my heart shall be dedicated to you alone. I wish my person was so too. God can do it, if He pleases, to whom I pray every day for that end, hoping that at length my prayers will be heard. I wish the time may be short, but I shall think it long till we see one another.

Written by the hand of that secretary, who in heart, body, and will, is, Your loyal and most assured Servant,

H. R.

Letter Sixth to Anne Boleyn.

To My Mistress. Because the time seems very long since I heard concerning your health and you, the great affection I have for you has induced me to send you this bearer, to be better informed of your health and pleasure, and because, since my parting from you, I have been told that the opinion in which I left you is totally changed, and that you would not come to court either with your mother, if you could, or in any other manner; which report, if true, I cannot sufficiently marvel at, because I am sure that I have since never done any thing to offend you, and it seems a very poor return for the great love which I bear you to keep me at a distance both from the speech and the person of the woman that I esteem most in the world: and if you love me with as much affection as I hope you do, I am sure that the distance of our two persons would be a little irksome to you, though this does not belong so much to the mistress as to the servant.

Consider well, my mistress, that absence from you grieves me sorely, hoping that it is not your will that it should be so; but if I knew for certain that you voluntarily desired it, I could do no other than mourn my ill-fortune, and by degrees abate my great folly. And so, for lack of time, I make an end of this rude letter, beseeching you to give credence to this bearer in all that he will tell you from me.

Written by the hand of your entire Servant, H. R.

Letter Seventh to Anne Boleyn.

Darling, these shall be only to advertise you that this bearer and his fellow be despatched with as many things to compass our matter, and to bring it to pass as our wits could imagine or devise; which brought to pass, as I trust, by their diligence, it shall be shortly, you and I shall have our desired end, which should be more to my heart's ease, and more quietness to my mind, than any other thing in the world; as, with God's grace, shortly I trust shall

be proved, but not so soon as I would it were; yet I will ensure you that there shall be no time lost that may be won, and further cannot be done; for ultra posse non est esse. Keep him not too long with you, but desire him, for your sake, to make the more speed; for the sooner we shall have word from him, the sooner shall our matter come to pass. And thus upon trust of your short repair to London, I make an end of my letter, my own sweet heart.

Written with the hand of him which desireth as much to be yours as you do to have him. H. R.

Letter Eighth Anne Boleyn to Wolsey.

My Lord, in my most humblest wise that my heart can think, I desire you to pardon me that I am so bold to trouble you with my simple and rude writing, esteeming it to proceed from her that is much desirous to know that your grace does well, as I perceive by this bearer that you do, the which I pray God long to continue, as I am most bound to pray; for I do know the great

pains and troubles that you have taken for me both day and night is never likely to be recompensed on my part, but alonely in loving you, next unto the king's grace, above all creatures living. And I do not doubt but the daily proofs of my deeds shall manifestly declare and affirm my writing to be true, and I do trust you do think the same.

My lord, I do assure you, I do long to hear from you news of the legate; for I do hope, as they come from you, they shall be very good; and I am sure you desire it as much as I, and more, and it were possible; as I know it is not: and thus remaining in a steadfast hope, I make an end of my letter.

Written with the hand of her that is most bound to be

Your humble Servant,

Anne Boleyn.

Postscript by Henry VIII.

The writer of this letter would not cease, till she had caused me likewise to set my hand, desiring you, though it be short, to take it in good part. I

ensure you that there is neither of us but greatly desireth to see you, and are joyous to hear that you have escaped this plague so well, trusting the fury thereof to be passed, especially with them that keepeth good diet, as I trust you do. The not hearing of the legate's arrival in France causeth us somewhat to muse; notwithstanding, we trust, by your diligence and vigilancy (with the assistance of Almighty God), shortly to be eased out of that trouble. No more to you at this time, but that I pray God send you as good health and prosperity as the writer would.

By your loving Sovereign and Friend.

H. R.

Letter Ninth to Anne Boleyn.

There came to me suddenly in the night the most afflicting news that could have arrived. The first, to hear of the sickness of my mistress, whom I esteem more than all the world, and whose health I desire as I do my own, so that I would gladly bear half your illness to

make you well. The second, from the fear that I have of being still long harassed by my enemy, Absence, much longer, who has hitherto given me all possible uneasiness, and as far as I can judge is determined to spite me more because I pray God to rid me of this troublesome tormentor. The third, because the physician in whom I have most confidence, is absent at the very time when he might do me the greatest pleasure; for I should hope, by him and his means, to obtain one of my chief joys on earth—that is the care of my mistress—yet for want of him I send you my second, and hope that he will soon make you well. I shall then love him more than ever. I beseech you to be guided by his advice in your illness. In so doing I hope soon to see you again, which will be to me a greater comfort than all the precious jewels in the world.

Written by that secretary, who is, and forever will be, your loyal and most assured Servant, H. (A B) R.

Letter Tenth to Anne Boleyn.

The uneasiness my doubts about your health gave me, disturbed and alarmed me exceedingly, and I should not have had any quiet without hearing certain tidings. But now, since you have as yet felt nothing, I hope, and am assured that it will spare you, as I hope it is doing with us. For when we were at Walton, two ushers, two valets de chambres and your brother, master-treasurer, fell ill, but are now quite well; and since we have returned to our house at Hundson, we have been perfectly well, and have not, at present, one sick person, God be praised; and I think, if you would retire from Surrey, as we did, you would escape all danger. There is another thing that may comfort you, which is, that, in truth in this distemper few or no women have been taken ill, and what is more, no person of our court, and few elsewhere, have died of it. For which reason I beg you, my entirely beloved, not to frighten yourself nor be too uneasy at our absence; for-

wherever I am, I am yours, and yet we must sometimes submit to our misfortunes, for whoever will struggle against fate is generally but so much the farther from gaining his end: wherefore comfort yourself, and take courage and avoid the pestilence as much as you can, for I hope shortly to make you sing, la renvoye. No more at present, from lack of time, but that I wish you in my arms, that I might a little dispel your unreasonable thoughts.

Written by the hand of him who is and always will be yours.

Im-H. R.-mutable.

Letter Eleventh to Anne Boleyn.

The cause of my writing at this time, good sweetheart, is only to understand of your good health and prosperity; whereof to know I would be as glad as in manner mine own, praying God that (an it be His pleasure) to send us shortly together, for I promise you I long for it. How be it, I trust it shall not be long to; and and seeing my darling is absent, I can do no less than to send

her some flesh, representing my name, which is hart flesh for Henry, prognosticating that hereafter, God willing, you may enjoy some of mine, which He pleased; I would were now.

As touching your sister's matter, I have caused Walter Welze to write to my lord my mind therein, whereby I trust that Eve shall not have power to deceive Adam; for surely, whatsoever is said, it cannot so stand with his honor but that he must needs take her, his natural daughter, now in her extreme necessity.

No more to you at this time, mine own darling, but that with a wish I would we were together an evening.

With the hands of yours,

H. R.

Letter Twelfth to Anne Boleyn.

Since your last letters, mine own darling, Walter Welshe, Master Browne, Thos. Care, Grion of Brearton, and John Coke, the apothecary, be fallen of the sweat in this house, and, thanked be God, all well recovered, so that as yet

the plague is not fully ceased here, but I trust shortly it shall. By the mercy of God, the rest of us yet be well, and I trust shall pass it either not to have it, or, at the least, as easily as the rest have done.

As touching the matter of Wilton, my lord cardinal hath had the nuns before him, and examined them, Mr. Bell being present; which hath certified me that, for a truth, she had confessed herself (which we would have had abbess) to have had two children by two sundry priests; and, further, since hath been kept by a servant of the Lord Broke that was, and that not long ago. Wherefore I would not, for all the gold in the world, clog your conscience nor mine to make her ruler of a house which is of so ungodly demeanor; nor, I trust, you would not that neither for brother nor sister; I should so destain mine honor or conscience. And, as touching the prioress, or Dame Eleanor's eldest sister, though there is not any evident case proved against them, and that the prioress is so old that for many years she could not be as she was named; yet

notwithstanding, to do you pleasure, I have done that neither of them shall have it, but that some other good and well-disposed woman shall have it, whereby the house shall be the better reformed (whereof I ensure you it had much need), and God much the better served.

As touching your abode at Hever, do therein as best shall like you, for you best know what air doth best with you; but I would it were come thereto (if it pleased God), that neither of us need care for that, for I ensure you I think it long. Suche is fallen sick of the sweat, and therefore I send you this bearer, because I think you long to hear tidings from us, as we do likewise from you.

Written with the hand de votre seul,

H. R.

Letter Thirteenth to Anne Boleyn.

The approach of the time for which I have so long waited rejoices me so much, that it seems almost to have come already. However, the entire accomplish-

ment cannot be till the two persons meet, which meeting is more desired by me than anything in this world; for what joy can be greater upon earth than to have the company of her who is dearest to me, knowing likewise that she does the same on her part, the thought of which gives me the greatest pleasure.

Judge what an effect the presence of that person must have on me, whose absence has grieved my heart more than either words or writing can express, and which nothing can cure, but that begging you, my mistress, to tell your father from me, that I desire him to hasten the time appointed by two days, that he may be at court before the old term, or, at farthest, on the day prefixed; for otherwise I shall think he will not do the lover's turn, as he said he would, nor answer my expectation.

No more at present for lack of time, hoping shortly that by word of mouth I shall tell you the rest of the sufferings endured by me from your absence.

Written by the hand of the secretary, who wishes himself at this moment pri-

vately with you, and who is, and always will be,

Your loyal and most assured Servant,

H. no other A B seek R.

Letter Fourteenth to Anne Boleyn.

Darling, I heartily recommend me to you, ascertaining you that I am not a little perplexed with such things as your brother shall on my part declare unto you, to whom I pray you give full credence, for it were too long to write. In my last letters I writ to you that I trusted shortly to see you, which is better known at London than with any that is about me, whereof I not a little marvel; but lack of discreet handling must needs be the cause thereof. No more to you at this time, but that I trust shortly our meetings shall not depend upon other men's light handlings, but upon our own.

Written with the hand of him that longeth to be yours.

H. R.

Letter Fifteenth to Anne Boleyn.

Mine own sweetheart, this shall be to advertise you of the great elengeness that I find here since your departing; for, I ensure you methinketh the time longer since your departing now last, than I was wont to do a whole fortnight. I think your kindness and my fervency of love causeth it; for, otherwise, I would not have thought it possible that for so little a while it should have grieved me. But now that I am coming towards you, methinketh my pains be half removed; and also I am right well comforted in so much that my book maketh substantially for my matter; in looking whereof I have spent above four hours this day, which causeth me now to write the shorter letter to you at this time, because of some pain in my head; wishing myself (especially an evening) in my sweetheart's arms, whose pretty dukkys I trust shortly to kiss.

Written by the hand of him that was, is. and shall be yours by his own will,

H. R.

Letter Sixteenth to Anne Boleyn.

Darling, though I have scant leisure, yet, remembering my promise, I thought it convenient to certify you briefly in what case our affairs stand. As touching a lodging for you, we have got one by my lord cardinal's means, the like whereof could not have been found hereabouts for all causes, as this bearer shall more show you. As touching our other affairs, I assure you there can be no more done, nor more diligence used, nor all manner of dangers better both foreseen and provided for, so that I trust it shall be hereafter to both our comforts, the specialties whereof were both too long to be written, and hardly by messenger to be declared. Whereof, till you repair hither, I keep something in store, trusting it shall not be long to; for I have caused my lord, your father, to make his provisions with speed; and thus for lack of time, darling, I make an end of my letter, written with the hand of him which I would were yours.

H. R.

Letter Seventeenth to Anne Boleyn.

The reasonable request of your last letter, with the pleasure also that I take to know them true, causeth me to send you these news. The legate which we most desire arrived at Paris on Sunday or Monday last past, so that I trust by the next Monday to hear of his arrival at Calais: and then I trust within a while after to enjoy that which I have so long longed for, to God's pleasure and our both comforts.

No more to you at this present, mine own darling, for lack of time, but that I would you were in mine arms, or I in yours, for I think it long since I kissed you.

Written after the killing of a hart, at eleven of the clock, minding, with God's grace, tomorrow, mightily timely, to kill another, by the hand which, I trust, shortly shall be yours.

HENRY R.

Letter Eighteenth to Anne Boleyn.

To inform you what joy it is to me

to understand of your conformableness with reason, and of the suppressing of your inutile and vain thoughts with the bridle of reason. I assure you all the good in this world could not counterpoise for my satisfaction the knowledge and certainty thereof, wherefore, good sweetheart, continue the same, not only in this, but in all your doings hereafter; for thereby shall come, both to you and me, the greatest quietness that may be in this world.

The cause why the bearer stays so long, is the business I have had to dress up gear for you; and which I trust, ere long to cause you occupy: then I trust to occupy yours, which shall be recompense enough to me for all my pains and labor.

The unfeigned sickness of this well-willing legate doth somewhat retard his access to your person; but I trust verily, when God shall send him health, he will with diligence recompense his demur. For I know well where he hath said (touching the saying and bruit that he is thought imperial) that it shall be well known in this matter that he is not im-

perial; and thus, for lack of time, sweetheart, farewell.

Written with the hand which fain would be yours, and so is the heart.

H. R.

LOVE LETTERS OF HENRY VIII TO ANNE BOLEYN.

BY J. O. HALLIWELL PHILLIPS

The Letters of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, perhaps the most remarkable documents of the kind known to exist, were published at Oxford in 1720 by Hearne, in a volume entitled "Roberti de Avesbury Historia de mirabilibus gestis Edwardi III," and inserted in the third volume of the Harleian Miscellany, 1745. These two editions differ considerably from each other, and still more so from the transcripts here given, which are taken from the edition printed at Paris by M. Meon, who held a situation in the Manuscript Department of the Bibliotheque de Roi. The fifth and thirteenth, however, which are not comprehended in the Vatican collection, are supplied from Hearne's work. Of the seventeen letters of which the series consists, eight are written in English and nine in French.

They appear to have been written after Anne Boleyn had been sent away from court, in consequence of reports injurious to her reputation, which had begun to be publicly circulated. Her removal indeed was so abrupt that she had resolved never to return. The king soon repented his harshness, and strove to persuade her to come back; but it was a long time, and not without great trouble, before he could induce her to comply. Her

retirement did not take place before the month of May, 1528; this is proved by a letter from Fox, Bishop of Hereford, to Gardiner, Bish of Winchester, dated the 4th of May, in that year, in which the writer, who had just returned from Rome, whither he had been sent to negotiate the king's divorce, gives an account of his landing at Sandwich on the 2nd, of his arrival on the same night at Greenwich, where the king then was, and of the order he received from him to go to the apartments of Anne Boleyn, which were in the Tiltyard, and inform her how anxious he had been to hasten the arrival of the legate, and how much he was rejoiced by it. This letter, formally in the collection of Harley, Earl of Oxford, is now at Rome.

It must have been very soon afterwards that Anne Boleyn left the court. In fact, in the first letter (4 of this series) the king excuses himself for being under the necessity of parting from her. In the second (6) he complains of the dislike which she shows to return to court; but in neither of them does he allude to the pestilential disease which in that year committed such ravages in England. In the third (10), however, he does advert to it as a disorder which has prevailed for some time, and on which he makes some observations.

Between this letter, probably written in the month of July, and the sixth (17), in which the king speaks of the arrival of the legate in Paris, and which must have been written about the end of September, there are two letters (1 and 5) certainly written within a

few days of each other. In the second of these two, viz., the fifth of this series, the king expresses his extreme satisfaction which he has received from the lady's answer to his request. In the effusion of his gratitude, he pays a visit to his mistress, and both address a letter (8) to Cardinal Wolsey, in which Henry manifests his astonishment at not having yet heard of the arrival of Campeggio, the legate, in Paris. The date of this letter may thus be fixed in the month of September.

The fourth (1), apparently written in August, is the most interesting of the whole collection, inasmuch as it fixes the period of the commencement of the king's affection for Anne Boleyn. He complains of "having been above a whole year struck with the dart of love," and that he is not yet certain whether he shall succeed in finding a place in the heart and affections of her whom he loves.

The last letter (18), which makes mention of the illness of the legate as the cause of the delay in the affair of the divorce, shows that this correspondence ended in May, 1529, at which time the court of legates was open for the final decision of that point.

Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, subsequently created Earl of Wiltshire, after passing many years at the court of Claude, queen of Francis I of France, returned to England about the end of the year 1525, at the age of eighteen. Here she was soon appointed maid of honor to Queen Katherine, and attracted the particular attentions of Henry VIII, who was then engaged in soliciting a divorce from

the Pope. The marked preference shown by the king for Anne Boleyn raised so much jealousy and slander that it was thought advisable by her family to remove the new favorite from the court; and it was during this retirement at Hever, a seat of her father's in Kent, that these letters were addressed to her by her royal lover. It was no doubt to render them the more agreeable that he wrote some of them in French. They breathe a fondness and ardor which could scarcely leave room to doubt the sincerity of his love.

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We have reprinted Mr. Halliwell Phillips to call attention to the change in order in this edition. A very little study of the letters themselves showed that the old order was impossible. The first six fall into a group by themselves, the 6th being the first to which we gave a nearly approximate date (July, 1527), before Anne's return to court. Henry's passion must date therefore from 1526. The 7th is fixed by references in other correspondence to February, 1528, and the 8th to June before she left the court. The 9th, 10th and 11th relate to the sweating sickness (end of June, order fixed by incidental references), and the 12th is after July 5th; the 13th and 14th are before her return. The reference to his book in No. 15 fixes the date as August, and No. 16 is fixed for August 20th, by Wolsey's finding a lodging for Anne. No. 17 is fixed for September (16th?) by Campeggio's arrival at Paris (September 14, 1528), and No. 18 by his illness as towards the end of

October. The scheme had been partly worked out when the editor observed that Mr. Brewer had already arranged them in his Calendar of State Papers, and to him therefore this order is due.

The old arrangement was 4, 6, 10, 1, 5, 17, 16, 2, 11, 3, 13, 9, 12, 7, 14, 15, 18, 8.

Page x. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written July, 1527. "Aut illic, aut nullibi." Either there, or nowhere.

xiii. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. This letter was written in July, 1527.

xvi. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written February, 1528. "Ultra posse non est esse." One can't do more than the possible.

xviii. Anne Boleyn to Cardinal Wolsey. MS. Cott. Vitellius, B. vii. f. 4. Written June 11, 1528. Printed by Ellis as from Katherine of Arragon. There is another letter from Anne to Wolsey, thanking him for a present. It is very similar to this, and is found in MS. Cott. Otho. c. x. f. 218 (printed in Burnet, i, 104, and in Ellis, Original Letters, vol. i).

xxii. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written June 16, 1528.

xxv. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. This letter was written June 20. "It." The sweating sickness. This is the 1528 epidemic.

"Your brother." George Boleyn, afterwards Viscount Rochford, executed 1536 on a charge of incest.

xxviii. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written about June 22, 1528. "Welze" is the same person as "Welshe" on p. xxx.

xxx. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written

July 6 (?), 1528. "Suche" is probably Zouch.

"Destain." Stain.

xxxiv. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written July 20, 1528.

xxxvii. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written July 21, 1528.

xxxix. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written August, 1528. "Elengeness." Loneliness, misery.

"My book." On the unlawfulness of his marriage with Katherine.

xli. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written August 20, 1528.

xliii. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written September 16, 1528. Campeggio actually arrived at Calais on Monday, September 14.

xlv. Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn. Written at the end of October, 1528.

KING HENRY VIII

His Character

Holbein has drawn the character and written the history of Henry on the canvas of his great picture. Masterful, cruel, crafty, merciless, courageous, sensual, through-seeing, humorous, mean, matter of fact, worldly-wise, and of indomitable will, Henry the Eighth is perhaps the most outstanding figure in English history. The reason is not far to seek. The genial adventurer with sporting tendencies and large-hearted proclivities is always popular with the mob, and "Bluff King Hal," as he was called, was of the eternal type adored by the people. He had a certain outward and inward affinity with Nero. Like Nero, he was corpulent; like Nero, he was red-haired; like Nero, he sang and poetised; like Nero, he was a lover of horsemanship, a master of the arts and the slave of his passions. If his private vices were great, his public virtues were no less considerable. He had the ineffable quality called charm, and the appearance of good-nature which captivated all who came within the orbit of his radiant personality. He was the "*beau garcon*," endearing himself to all women by his compelling and conquering manhood. Henry was every inch a man, but he was no gentleman. He chucked even Justice under the chin, and Justice winked her blind eye.

It is extraordinary that in spite of his brutality, both Katharine and Anne Boleyn spoke of him as a model of kindness. This cannot be accounted for alone by that divinity which doth hedge a king.

There is, above all, in the face of Henry, as depicted by Holbein, that look of impenetrable mystery which was the background of his character. Many royal men have this strange quality; with some it is inborn, with others it is assumed. Of Henry, Cavendish,* a contemporary, records the following saying: "Three may keep counsel, if two be away; and if I thought my cap knew my counsel, I would throw it in the fire and burn it." Referring to this passage, Brewer says, "Never had the King spoke a truer word or described himself more accurately. Few would have thought that, under so careless and splendid an exterior—the very ideal of bluff, open-hearted good humour and frankness—there lay a watchful and secret mind that marked what was going on without seeming to mark it; kept its own counsel until it was time to strike, and then struck as suddenly and remorselessly as a beast of prey. It was strange

*Cavendish was Wolsey's secretary, and after and after his fall wrote the interesting "Life of Wolsey," one of the manuscript copies of which evidently fell into Shakespeare's hands before he wrote "Henry VIII."

to witness so much subtlety combined with so much strength."

There was something baffling and terrifying in the mysterious bonhomie of the King. In spite of Cæsar's dictum, it is the fat enemy who is to be feared; a thin villain is more easily seen through.

His Ancestry

Henry's antecedents were far from glorious. The Tudors were a Welsh family of somewhat humble stock. Henry VII.'s great-grandfather was butler or steward to the Bishop of Bangor, whose son, Owen Tudor, coming to London, obtained a clerkship of the Wardrobe to Henry V.'s Queen, Catherine of France. Within a few years of Henry's death, the widowed Queen and her clerk of the wardrobe were secretly living together as man and wife. The two sons of this morganatic match, Edmund and Jasper, were favoured by their half brother, Henry VI. Edmund, the elder, was knighted, and then made Earl of Richmond. In 1453 he was formally declared legitimate, and enrolled a member of the King's Council. Two years later he married the Lady Margaret Beaufort, a descendant of Edward III. It was this union between Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort which gave Henry VII. his claim by descent to the English throne.

The popularity of the Tudors was, no doubt, enhanced by the fact that with their line, kings of decisively English blood, for the first time

since the Norman Conquest, sat on the English throne.

His Early Days

When Henry VIII. ascended the throne in 1509, England regarded him with almost universal loyalty. The memory of the long years of the Wars of the Roses and the wars of the Pretenders during the reign of his father, were fresh in the people's mind. No other than he could have attained to the throne without civil war.

Within two months he married Katharine of Aragon, his brother's widow, and a few days afterwards the King and Queen were crowned with great splendour in Westminster Abbey. He was still in his eighteenth year, of fine physical development, but of no special mental precocity. For the first five years of his reign, he was influenced by his Council, and especially by his father-in-law, Ferdinand the Catholic, giving little indication of the later mental vigour and power of initiation which made his reign so memorable in English annals.

The political situation in Europe was a difficult one for Henry to deal with. France and Spain were the rivals for Imperial dominion. England was in danger of falling between two stools, such was the eagerness of each that the other should not support her. Henry, through his marriage with Katharine, began by being allied to Spain, and this alliance involved England in the costly burden of war. Henry's re-

sentment at the empty result of this warfare, broke the Spanish alliance. Wolsey's aim was to keep the country out of wars, and a long period of peace raised England to the position of arbiter of Europe in the balanced contest between France and Spain.

The Field of the Cloth of Gold

It was in connection with the meetings and intrigues now with one power, now with the other, that the famous meeting with the French King at Guisnes, known as "the Field of the Cloth of Gold," was held in 1520.

That the destinies of kingdoms sometimes hang on trifles is curiously exemplified by a singular incident which preceded the famous meeting. Francis I. prided himself on his beard. As a proof of his desire for the meeting with Francis, and out of compliment to the French King, Henry announced his resolve to wear his beard uncut until the meeting took place. But he reckoned without his wife. Some weeks before the meeting Louise of Savoy, the Queen-Mother of France, taxed Boleyn, the English Ambassador, with a report that Henry had put off his beard. "I said," writes Boleyn, "that, as I suppose, it hath been by the Queen's desire, for I told my lady that I have hereafore known when the King's grace hath worn long his beard, that the Queen hath daily made him great instance, and desired him to put it off for her sake." This incident caused some resentment on the part of the

French King, who was only pacified Henry's tact.

So small a matter might have proved a *casus belli.*

The meeting was held amidst scenes of unparalleled splendour. The temporary palace erected for the occasion was so magnificent that a chronicler tells us it might have been the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Henry "the goodliest prince that ever reigned over the realm of England," is described as *"honnete, hault et droit,* in manner gentle and gracious, rather fat, with a red beard, large enough, and very becoming."

On this occasion Wolsey was accompanied by two hundred gentlemen clad in crimson velvet, and had a body-guard of two hundred archers. He was clothed in crimson satin from head to foot, his mule was covered with crimson velvet, and her trappings were all of gold.

There were jousts and many entertainments and rejoicings, many kissings of Royal cheeks, but the Sovereigns hated each other cordially. While they were kissing they were plotting against each other. A more unedifying page of history has not been written. Appalling, indeed, are the shifts and intrigues which go to make up the records of the time.

The rulers of Europe were playing a game of cards, in which all the players were in collusion with, and all cheating each other. Temporizing and intriguing, Henry met the Spanish monarch immediately before and imme-

diately after his meeting with the French King. Within a few months, France and Spain were again at war, and England, in a fruitless and costly struggle, fought on the side of Spain.

It was the divorce from Katharine of Aragon and its momentous consequences, which finally put an end to the alliance with Spain, and to the struggle with France succeeded a long struggle with Spain, which culminated in the great event of The Armada in the reign of Henry's daughter, Elizabeth.

However, in these pages it is not proposed to enlarge upon the political aspect of the times, but rather to deal with the dramatic and domestic side of Henry's being. In the play of *Henry VIII.*, the author or authors (for to another than Shakespeare is ascribed a portion of the drama), have given us as impartial a view of his character as a due regard for truth on the one hand, and a respect for the scaffold on the other, permitted.

His Aspirations

There can be no doubt that when Henry ascended the throne, he had a sincere wish to serve God and uphold the right.

In his early years he was really devout and generous in almsgiving. Erasmus affirmed that his Court was an example to all Christendom for learning and piety. To the Pope he paid deference as to the representative of God.

With youthful enthusiasm, the young King, looking round and seeing corruption on every side, said to Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador: "Nor do I see any faith in the world save in me, and therefore God Almighty, who knows this, prosper my affairs."

In Henry's early reign, England was trusted more than any country to keep faith in her alliances. At a time when all was perfidy and treachery, promises and alliances were made only to be broken when self-interest prompted. History, like Nature itself, is ruled by brutal laws, and to play the round game of politics with single-handed honesty would be to lose at every turn. Henry was born into an inheritance of blood and blackmail. Corruption has its vested interests. It is useless to attempt to stem the recurrent tide of corruption by sprinkling the waves with holy water.

Then religion was a part of men's daily lives, but the principles of Christianity were set at naught at the first bid of expediency.

Men murdered to live—the axe and the sword were the final Court of Appeal. Nor does the old order change appreciably in the course of a few hundred years. In international politics, as in public life, when self-interest steps in, Christianity goes to the wall.

To-day we grind our axe with a difference. A more subtle process of dealing with our rivals obtains. To-day the pen is mightier than the stiletto. The bravo still plies his

than the sword, the stylograph is more deadly trade. He no longer takes life, but character. To intrigue, to combine against those outside the ring is often the swiftest way to fortune. By such combination do weaker particles make themselves strong. To "play the game" is necessary to progress. The world was not made for poets and idealists. To quote an anonymous modern writer:

"'Act well your part, there all the honour lies';
Stoop to expediency and honour dies.
Many there are that in the race for fame,
Lose the great cause to win the little game,
Who pandering to the town's decadent taste,
Barter the precious pearl for gawdy paste,
And leave upon the virgin page of Time
The venom'd trail of iridescent slime."

Henry's eyes soon opened. His character, like his body, underwent a gradual process of expansion.

His Pastimes

Soon the iighter side of kingship was not disdained. One authority wrote in 1515: "He is a youngling, cares for nothing but girls and hunting." He was an inveterate gambler, and turned the sport of hunting into a martyrdom, rising at four or five in the morning, and hunting till nine or ten at night. Another contemporary writes: "He devotes himself to accomplishments and amusements day and night, is intent on nothing else, and leaves business to Wolsey, who rules everything."

As a sportsman, Henry was the *"beau ideal"* of his people. In the lists he especially distinguished himself, "in supernatural feats, changing his horses, and making them fly or rather leap, to the delight and ecstasy of everybody."

He also gave himself to masquerades and charades. We are told: "It was at the Christmas festivals at Richmond, that Henry VIII. stole from the side of the Queen during the jousts, and returned in the disguise of a strange Knight, astonishing all the company with the grace and vigour of his tilting. At first the King appeared ashamed of taking part in these gladiatorial exercises, but the applause he received on all sides soon inclined him openly to oppear on every occasion in the tilt-yard. Katharine humoured the childish taste of her husband for disguisings and masquings, by pretending great surprise when he presented himself before her in some assumed character."

He was gifted with enormous energy; he could ride all day, changing his horses nine or ten times a day; then he would dance all night; even then his energies were not exhausted; then he would write what the courtiers described as poetry, or he would compose music, or he would dash off an attack on Luther, and so earn from the Pope the much-coveted title of *"Fidei Defensor."*

In shooting at the butt, it is said, Henry excelled, drawing the best bow in England. At tennis, too, he excelled beyond all others.

He was addicted to games of chance, and his courtiers permitted him to lose as much as £3,500 in the course of one year—scarcely a tactful proceeding. He played with taste and execution on the organ, harpsichord and lute. He had a powerful voice, and sang with great accomplishment.

One of Henry's anthems, "O Lord, the Maker of all thyng," is said to be of the highest merit, and is still sung in our Cathedrals. In his songs he particularly liked to dwell on his constancy as a lover:

"As the holly groweth green and never changeth hue,
So I am—ever have been—unto my lady true."

and again:

"For whoso loveth, should love but one."

An admirable maxim.

As Statesman

In spite of all these distractions, Henry was an excellent man of business in the State—indeed, he threw himself into public affairs with the energy which characterised all his doings. The autocrat only slumbered in Henry; and before many years had passed, he threw the enormous energy, which he had hitherto reserved for his pleasure, into affairs of State.

Under Henry, the Navy was first organised as a permanent force. His power of detail was prodigious in this direction. Ever loving

the picturesque, even in the most practical affairs of life, Henry "acted as pilot and wore a sailor's coat and trousers, made of cloth of gold, and a gold chain with the inscription, '*Dieu est mon droit*,' to which was suspended a whistle which he blew nearly as loud as a trumpet." A strange picture!

He was a practical architect, and Whitehall Palace and many other great buildings owed their masonry to his hand.

He spoke French, Spanish, Italian and Latin with great perfection.

He said many wise things. Of the much-debated Divorce, Henry said: "The law of every man's conscience be but a private Court, yet it is the highest and supreme Court for judgment or justice." As the most unjust wars have often produced the greatest heroisms, so the vilest causes have often produced the profoundest utterances.

He appears to have been at peace with himself and complacent towards God. In 1541, during his temporary happiness with Catherine Howard, he attended mass in the chapel, and "receiving his Maker, gave Him most hearty thanks for the good life he led and trusted to lead with his wife; and also desired the Bishop of Lincoln to make like prayer, and give like thanks on All Souls' Day."

Henry confessed his sins every day during the plague. When it abated, his spirits revived, and he wrote daily love-letters to Anne Boleyn, whom he had previously banished from the Court.

As Moralist

A stern moralist in regard to the conduct of others, he had an indulgence towards himself which enabled him somewhat freely to interpret the Divine right of Kings as *"Le droit de seigneur."* But it is human to tolerate in ourselves the failings which we so rightly deprecate in our inferiors.

So strong was he in his self-assurance, that he made even his conscience his slave.

Henry sometimes lacked regal taste. The night Anne Boleyn was executed he supped with Jane Seymour; they were betrothed the next morning, and married ten days later. It is also recorded that on the day following Katharine's death, Henry went to a ball, clad all in yellow.

The commendation or condemnation of Henry's public life depends upon our point of view—upon which side we take in the eternal strife between Church and State.

In this dilemma we must then judge by results, for the truest expression of a man is his work; his greatness or his littleness is measured by his output. Henry produced great results, though he may have been the unconscious instrument of Fate. The motives which guided him in his dealings with the Roman Catholic Church may have been only selfish—they resulted in the emancipation of England from the tyranny of Popedom. A Catholic estimate of him would, of course, have been wholly condemnatory, yet it must

be remembered that his quarrel was entirely with the supremacy of the Pope, and that otherwise Henry's Church retained every dogma and every observance believed in and practised by Roman Catholics.

His Greatness

His learning was great, and it was illuminated by his genius. Gradually he learned to control others—to do this he learned to control his temper, when control was useful, but he was always able to make diplomatic use of his rage—a faculty ever helpful in the conduct of one's life! In fact, it is difficult to determine whose genius was greater—Wolsey's as the diplomatist and administrator, or Henry's as the man of action, the figurehead of the State. Around him he gathered the great men of his time, and their learning he turned to his own account, with that adaptiveness which is the peculiar attribute of genius. Shakespeare himself was not more assimilative. In Wolsey, Henry appreciated the mighty minister, and this is one of his claims to greatness, for graciously to permit others to be great is a sign of greatness in a King.

WOLSEY

His Early Life

Wolsey was born at Ipswich, probably in the year 1471. His father, Robert Wolsey, was a grazier, and perhaps also a butcher, in well-to-do circumstances. Sent to Oxford at the age of 11, at 15 he was made a Bachelor of Arts. He became parish priest of St. Mary's, at Lymington, in 1500. Within a year he was subjected to the indignity of being put into the public stocks—for what reason is not known. It has been said that he was concerned in a drunken fray. I prefer to think that, in an unguarded moment, he had been tempted to speak the truth. No doubt this was his first lesson in diplomacy.

In 1507 Wolsey entered the service of Henry VII. as chaplain, and seems to have acted as secretary to Richard Fox, Lord Privy Seal. Thus Wolsey was trained in the policy of Henry VII., which he never forgot.

His Growing Power

When Henry VIII. came to the throne, he soon realised Wolsey's value, and allowed him full scope for his ambition.

Wolsey thought it desirable to become a Cardinal—a view that was shared by Henry, whose right hand Wolsey had become. In 1514 Henry wrote to the Pope asking that the Hat should be conferred on his favourite, who in the following year was made Lord

Chancellor of England. There was some hesitancy which bribery and threats overcame, and in 1515 Wolsey was created Cardinal, in spite of the hatred which Leo X. bore him. Having won this instalment of greatness, Wolsey promptly asked for the Legateship which should give him precedence over the Archbishop of Canterbury. This ambition was realised three years later, but only by what practically amounted to political and ecclesiastical blackmail. In the Church and State Wolsey now stood second only to the King.

HIS STATE

(*a*) *His Retinue*

As an instance of the state he kept, we are told that he had as many as five hundred retainers—among them many lords and ladies. Cavendish, his secretary, describes his pomp when he walked abroad as follows: "First went the Cardinal's attendants, attired in boddices of crimson velvet with gold chains, and the inferior officers in coats of scarlet bordered with black velvet. After these came two gentlemen bearing the great seal and his Cardinal's hat, then two priests with silver pillars and poleaxes, and next two great crosses of silver, whereof one of them was for his Archbishoprick and the other for his legacy borne always before him, whithersoever he went or rode. Then came the Cardinal him-

self, very sumptuously, on a mule trapped with crimson velvet and his stirrup of copper gilt." Sometimes he preferred to make his progress on the river, for which purpose he had a magnificent State barge "furnished with yeomen standing on the bayles and crowded with his Gentlemen within and without."

His stables were also extensive. His choir far excelled that of the King. Besides all the officials attendant on the Cardinal, Wolsey had 160 personal attendants, including his High Chamberlain, vice-chamberlain; twelve gentlemen ushers, daily waiters; eight gentlemen ushers and waiters of his privy chamber, nine or ten lords, forty persons acting as gentlemen cupbearers, carvers, servers, etc., six yeomen ushers, eight grooms of the chamber, forty-six yeomen of his chamber (one daily to attend upon his person), sixteen doctors and chaplains, two secretaries, three clerks, and four counsellors learned in the law. As Lord Chancellor, he had an additional and separate retinue, almost as numerous, including ministers, armourers, serjeants-at-arms, herald, etc.

(*b*) *Gifts from Foreign Powers*

Nor was he above using the gentle suasion of his office to obtain sumptuous gifts from the representatives of foreign powers — for Giustinian, on his return to Venice, reported to the Doge and Senate that "Cardinal Wolsey is very anxious for the signory to send him a hundred Damascene carpets for which he

has asked several times, and expected to receive them by the last galleys. This present," continues the diplomat, "might make him pass a decree in our favour; and, at any rate, it would render the Cardinal friendly to our nation in other matters." The carpets, it seems, were duly sent to the Cardinal.

(c) *His Drinking Water*

To show his disregard for money, it may be mentioned that in order to obtain pure water for himself and his household, and not being satisfied with the drinking water at Hampton Court, Wolsey had the water brought from the springs at Coombe Hill by means of leaden pipes, at a cost, it is said, of something like £50,000.

(d) *His Table*

Wolsey seems to have been a lover of good food, for Skelton, for whose verse the Cardinal had perhaps expressed contempt, wrote:

"To drynke and for to eate
Swete hypocras* and swete meate
To keep his flesh chast
In Lent for a repast
He eateth capon's stew,
Fesaunt and partriche mewed
Hennes checkynges and pygges."

*Hypocras—"A favorite medicated drink, compound of wine, usually red, with spices and sugar."

(Skelton, it should be explained, was the Poet Laureate.) It appears that on this score of his delicate digestion, Wolsey procured a dispensation from the Pope for the Lenten observances.

He had not a robust constitution, and suffered from many ailments. On one occasion, Henry sent him some pills—it is not recorded, however, that Wolsey partook of them.

(*e*) *His Orange*

Cavendish speaks of a peculiar habit of the great Cardinal. He tells us that, "Whenever he was in a crowd or pestered with suitors, he most commonly held to his nose a very fair orange whereof the meat or substance within was taken out, and filled up again with the part of a sponge, wherein was vinegar and other confections against the pestilent airs!" The habit may have given offence to importunate mayors and others—the Poet Laureate himself may have been thus affronted by the imperious Cardinal, when he wrote:

"He is set so high
In his hierarchy
Of frantic phrenesy
And foolish fantasy
That in the Chamber of Stars
All matters there he mars.
Clapping his rod on the Board
No man dare speak a word;

* * * * *

Some say "yes" and some
Sit still as they were dumb.
Thus thwarting over them,
He ruleth all the roast
With bragging and with boast.
Borne up on every side
With pomp and with pride."

As a proof of his sensuous tastes, Cavendish wrote:

"The subtle perfumes of musk and sweet amber
There wanted none to perfume all my chamber."

(*f*) *His Fool*

That Wolsey, like Henry, was possessed of a sense of humour we have abundant evidence in his utterances. Yet he kept a Fool about him—possibly in order that he might glean the opinions of the courtiers and common people. After Wolsey's fall, he sent this Fool as a present to King Henry. But so loth was the Fool to leave his master and to suffer what he considered a social descent, that six tall yeomen had to conduct him to the Court; "for," says Cavendish, "the poor fool took on and fared so in such a rage when he saw that he must needs depart from my lord. Yet, notwithstanding, they conveyed him with Master Norris to the Court, where the King received him most gladly."

(*g*) *Hampton Court*

At his Palace of Hampton Court there were 280 beds always ready for strangers. These

red, green and russet velvet, satin and silk, and all with magnificent canopies. The counterpanes, of which there were many hundreds, we are told, were of "tawny damask, lined with blue buckram; blue damask with flowers of gold; others of red satin with a great rose in the midst, wrought with needlework and with garters." Another is described as "of blue sarcenet, with a tree in the midst and beastes with scriptures, all wrought with needlework." The splendour of these beds beggars all description.

(*h*) *His Plate*

His gold and silver plate at Hampton Court alone, was valued by the Venetian Ambassador as worth 300,000 golden ducats, which would be the equivalent in modern coin of a million and a half! The silver was estimated at a similar amount. It is said that the quality was no less striking than the quantity, for Wolsey insisted on the most artistic workmanship. He had also a bowl of gold "with a cover garnished with rubies, diamonds, pearls and a sapphire set in a goblet." These gorgeous vessels were decorated with the Cardinal's hat, and sometimes, too, less appropriately perhaps, with images of Christ!

beds were of great splendour, being made of

It is said that the decorations and furniture of Wolsey's Palace were on so splendid a scale that it threw the King's into the shade.

(*i*) *His Prodigal Splendour*

Like a wise minister, Wolsey did not neglect to entertain the King and keep his mind on trivial things. Hampton Court had become the scene of unrestrained gaiety. Music was always played on these occasions, and the King frequently took part in the revels, dancing, masquerading and singing, accompanying himself on the harpsichord or lute.

The description in Cavendish's "Life of Wolsey" of the famous feast given by the Cardinal to the French ambassadors gives a graphic account of his prodigal splendour. As to the delicacies which were furnished at the supper, Cavendish writes:—

"Anon came up the second course with so many dishes, subtleties and curious devices, which were above a hundred in number, of so goodly proportion and costly, that I suppose the Frenchmen never saw the like. The wonder was no less than it was worthy, indeed. There were castles with images in the same; Paul's Church and steeple, in proportion for the quantity as well counterfeited as the painter should have painted it upon a cloth or wall. There were beasts, birds, fowls of divers kinds, and personages, most lively made and counterfeit in dishes; some fighting, as it were, with swords, some with guns and crossbows; some vaulting and leaping; some dancing with ladies, some in complete harness, jousting with spears, and with many more devices than I am able with my wit to describe."

Giustinian, speaking of one of these banquets, writes: "The like of it was never given either by Cleopatra or Caligula." We must remember that Wolsey surrounded himself with such worldly vanities less from any vulgarity in his nature than from a desire to work upon the common mind, ever ready to be impressed by pomp and circumstance.

The Mind of Wolsey

If the outer man was thus caparisoned, what of Wolsey's mind? Its furniture, too, beggared all description. Amiable as Wolsey could be, he could also on occasions be as brusque as his royal master. A contemporary writer says: "I had rather be commanded to Rome than deliver letters to him and wait an answer. When he walks in the Park, he will suffer no suitor to come nigh unto him, but commands him away as far as a man will shoot an arrow."

Yet to others he could be of sweet and gentle disposition and ready to listen and to help with advice.

"Lofty and sour to them that loved him not,
But to those men that sought him sweets
summer."

To those who regard characters as either black or white, Wolsey's was indeed a contradiction. Charges of a personal character have been brought against the great prelate, which need not here be referred to, unless it

be to say that if they were true, by so much the less he was a priest, by so much more he was a man.

His Ambition

There is no doubt that the Cardinal made several attempts to become Pope—but this enterprise was doomed to failure, although in it he was supported warmly by the King. To gain this end much bribery was needed, "especially to the younger men who are generally the most needy," as the Cardinal said. Wolsey was a sufficiently accomplished social diplomatist to conciliate the young, for their term of office begins to-morrow, and gold is the key of consciences. He was hated and feared, flattered, cajoled and brow-beaten where possible. But as a source of income he was ever held in high regard by the Pope.

His own annual income from bribes—royal and otherwise—was indeed stupendous, though these were received with the knowledge of the King.

So great was the power Wolsey attained to that Fox said of him: "We have to deal with the Cardinal, who is not Cardinal but King." He wrote of himself, "*Ego et rex meus*," and had the initials "T. W." and the Cardinal's hat stamped on the King's coins. These were among the charges brought against him in his fall.

To his ambitions there was no limit. For the spoils of office he had "an unbounded

stomach." As an instance of his pretensions it is recorded that during the festivities of the Emperor's visit to England in 1520, "Wolsey alone sat down to dinner with the royal party, while peers, like the Dukes of Suffolk and Buckingham, performed menial offices for the Cardinal, as well as for Emperor, King and Queen."

When he met Charles at Bruges in 1521 "he treated the Emperor of Spain as an equal. He did not dismount from his mule, but merely doffed his cap, and embraced as a brother the temporal head of Christendom."

"He never granted audience either to English peers or foreign ambassadors" (says Giustinian) "until the third or fourth time of asking." Small wonder that he incurred the hatred of the nobility and the jealousy of the King. During his embassy to France in 1527, it is said that "his attendants served cap in hand, and when bringing the dishes knelt before him in the act of presenting them. Those who waited on the Most Christian King, kept their caps on their heads, dispensing with such exaggerated ceremonies." Had Wolsey's insolence been tempered by his sense of humour, his fall might have been on a softer place, as his Fool is believed to have remarked.

His Policy

In his policy of the reform of the Church, Wolsey dealt as a giant with his gigantic task. To quote a passage from Taunton: "Ignorance, he knew, was the root of most of the

mischief of the day; so by education he endeavoured to give men the means to know better. Falsehood can only be expelled by Truth. . . . Had the other prelates of the age realized the true cause of the religious disputes, and how much they themselves were responsible for the present Ignorance, the sacred name of religion would not have had so bloody a record in this country."

Wolsey's idea was, in fact, to bring the clergy in touch with the thought and conditions of the time. It is wonderful to reflect that this one brain should have controlled the secular and ecclesiastical destinies of Christendom.

To reform the Church would seem to have been an almost superhuman undertaking, but to a man of Wolsey's greatness obstacles are only incentives to energy. He was "eager to cleanse the Church from the accumulated evil effects of centuries of human passions." A great man is stronger than a system, while he lives; but the system often outlives the man. Wolsey lived in a time whose very atmosphere was charged with intrigue. Had he not yielded to a Government by slaughter, he would not have existed.

The Cardinal realised that ignorance was one of the chief causes of the difficulties in the Church. So with great zeal he devoted himself to the founding of two colleges, one in Ipswich, the other in Oxford. His scheme was never entirely carried out, for on Wolsey's fall his works were not completed. The Col-

lege at Ipswich fell into abeyance, but his college at Oxford was spared and refounded. Originally called Cardinal College, it was renamed Christ Church, so that not even in name was it allowed to be a memorial of Wolsey's greatness.

His Genius

For a long time Wolsey was regarded merely as the type of the ambitious and arrogant ecclesiastic whom the Reformation had made an impossibility in the future. It was not till the mass of documents relating to the reign of Henry VIII. was published that it was possible to estimate the greatness of the Cardinal's schemes. He took a wider view of the problems of his time than any statesman had done before. He had a genius for diplomacy. He was an artist and enthusiast in politics. They were not a pursuit to him, but a passion. Not perhaps unjustly has he been called the greatest statesman England ever produced.

England, at the beginning of Henry VIII.'s reign, was weakened after the struggles of the Civil Wars, and wished to find peace at home at the cost of obscurity abroad. But it was this England which Wolsey's policy raised "from a third-rate state of little account into the highest circle of European politics." Wolsey did not show his genius to the best advantage in local politics, but in diplomacy. He could only be inspired by the gigantic things of statecraft. When he was set by Henry to

deal with the sordid matter of the divorce, he felt restricted and cramped. He was better as a patriot than as a royal servant. It was this feeling of being sullied and unnerved in the uncongenial skirmishings of the divorce that jarred on his sensitive nature and made his ambitious hand lose its cunning. A first-rate man cannot do second-rate things well.

Henry and Wolsey were two giants littered in one day. Wolsey had realised his possibilities of power before Henry. But when Henry once learned how easy it was for him to get his own way, Wolsey learned how dependent he necessarily was on the King's good will. And then, "the nation which had trembled before Wolsey, leaned to temble before the King who could destroy Wolsey with a breath."

Had Wolsey been able to fulfil his own ideals, had he been the head of a Republic and not the servant of a King, his public record would no doubt have been on a higher ethical plane. That he himself realised this is shown by his pathetic words to Sir William Kingston, which have been but slightly paraphrased by Shakespeare: "Well, well, Master Kingston, I see how the matter against me is framed, but if I had served my God as diligently as I have done the King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs." In this frankness we recognise once again a flicker of greatness —one might almost say a touch of divine humour.

The lives of great men compose themselves

dramatically; Wolsey's end was indeed a fit theme for the dramatist.

His Fall

In his later years, Wolsey began to totter on his throne. The King had become more and more masterful. It was impossible for two such stormy men to act permanently in concord. In 1528, Wolsey said that as soon as he had accomplished his ambition of reconciling England and France, and reforming the English laws and settling the succession, "he would retire and serve God for the rest of his days." In 1529 he lost his hold over Parliament and over Henry. The Great Seal was taken from him.

The end of Wolsey was indeed appalling in its sordid tragedy. The woman had prevailed —Anne's revenge was sufficiently complete to satisfy even a woman scorned. The King, too, was probably more inclined to lend a willing ear to her whisperings, since he had grown jealous of his minister's greatness. He paid to his superior the tribute of hatred. Henry, who had treated the Cardinal as his friend and "walked with him in the garden arm in arm and sometimes with his arm thrown caressingly round his shoulder," now felt very differently towards his one-time favourite.

Covetous of Wolsey's splendour, he asked him why he, a subject, should have so magnificent an abode as Hampton Court, whereupon Wolsey diplomaticaly answered (feeling

perhaps the twitch of a phantom rope around his neck), "To show how noble a palace a subject may offer to his sovereign." The King was not slow to accept this offer, and thenceforth made Hampton Court Palace his own.

Wolsey, too, was failing in body—the sharks that follow the ship of State were already scenting their prey. As the King turned his back on Wolsey, Wolsey turned his face to God. Accused of high treason for having acted as Legate, Wolsey pleaded guilty of the offence, committed with the approval of the King. He was deprived of his worldly goods, and retired to his house at Esher.

Wolsey an Exile from Court

Cavendish says: "My Lord and his family continued there the space of three or four weeks without beds, sheets, tablecloths, cups and dishes to eat our meat, or to lie in." He was forced to borrow the bare necessaries of life. The mighty had fallen indeed! This was in the year 1529. In his disgrace, he was without friends. The Pope ignored him. But Queen Katharine—noble in a kindred sorrow—sent words of sympathy. Death was approaching, and Wolsey prepared himself for the great event by fasting and prayer. Ordered to York, he arrived at Peterborough in Easter Week. There it is said: "Upon Palm Sunday, he went in procession with the monks, bearing his palm; setting forth God's service right honourably with such singing men as he then

had remaining with him."

He Washes the Feet of the Poor

And upon Maundy Thursday he made his Maundy in Our Lady's Chapel, having fifty-nine poor men, whose feet he washed, wiped and kissed; each of these poor men had twelve pence in money, three ells of canvas to make them shirts, a pair of new shoes, a cast of mead, three red herrings, and three white herrings, and the odd person had two shillings. Upon Easter Day he rode to the Resurrection,* and that morning he went in procession in his Cardinal's vesture, with his hat and hood on his head, and he himself sang there the High Mass very devoutly, and granted Clean Remission to all the hearers, and there continued all the holidays.

Arrived at York, he indulged with a difference in his old love of hospitality; "he kept a noble house and plenty of both meat and drink for all comers, both for rich and poor, and much alms given at his gates. He used much charity and pity among his poor tenants and others." This caused him to be beloved in the country. Those that hated him owing to his repute learned to love him—he went among the people and brought them food and comforted them in their troubles. Now he was loved among the poor as he had been feared among the great.

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*The ceremony of bringing the Blessed Sacrament from the sepulchre where it had lain since the Good Friday. This took place early on Easter Monday.

Condemned to the Tower

On the 4th November, he was arrested on a new charge of high treason and condemned to the Tower. He left under custody amid the lamentations of the poor people, who in their thousands crowded round him, crying: "God save your Grace! God save your Grace! The foul evil take all them that hath thus taken you from us! We pray God that a very vengeance may light upon them." He remained at Sheffield Park, the Earl of Shrewsbury's seat, for eighteen days. Here his health broke down. There arrived, with twenty-four of the Guard from London, Sir William Kingston with order to conduct him to the Tower. The next day, in spite of increasing illness, he set out, but he could hardly ride his mule.

His End

Reaching the Abbey at Leicester on the 26th of November ;and being received by the Benedictine monks, he said: "Father Abbot, I am come hither to leave my bones among you." Here he took to his last bed, and made ready to meet his God.

The following morning, the 29th of November, he who had trod the ways of glory and sounded all the depths and shoals of honour, he who had shaped the destinies of Empires, before whom Popes and Parliaments had trembled, he who had swathed himself in the purple of kingdom, of power and of glory, learned the littleness of greatness and entered the Republic of Death in a hair-shirt.

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